

Social Security is my lifeline. It stands between me and homelessness.

These families and seniors deserve to have the certainty of a Federal Government that stands ready to pay its debt. They do not deserve to turn on the news every day and read about the political games House Republicans are playing with their lives and economic future. Democrats have been at the table. We have been ready and willing to compromise for months and months. We know we need to get this done. We have offered compromise after compromise. We have come to the middle and beyond. We have offered serious and deep cuts in Federal spending—very hard for some of us to do.

We have put it on the table and then we offered even more. But again and again, the House Republicans have said no. They refuse to compromise, and they refuse to come to the middle. Time and time again, they seem to be more interested in satisfying the most extreme elements of their base than on finding real solutions for the people of this country.

The House Republicans even sent us a bill they called cut, cap and balance that was not only widely understood to be a political gimmick but it had no chance of becoming law, and not only would it have been absolutely devastating for families and seniors across this country but it managed to waste precious time in Congress at a point when that resource is getting scarcer and scarcer.

So we are down to the wire. Political games need to end. They need to stop finding ways to say no and start figuring out what they can say yes to. The bill we introduced last night is a compromise. I do not believe it is perfect, but it gets us where we need to get to protect families and small businesses across America from market uncertainty, not just for a month or two. That is not what American families need. They need to know they have that economic certainty and that we will not be back in this ball game in just a few short months, going through the same process, with people worried about their Social Security checks and veterans worried again and with the markets uncertain.

The legislation that was introduced last night does make deep and serious cuts in government spending, savings that have either been discussed and agreed on in previous negotiations with Republicans or that Republicans have actually used in the budgets they recently passed themselves.

It does protect Medicare and Social Security that was promised to our seniors. It does not increase revenue, something many of us have argued time and time again needs to be a part of a balanced approach to a conclusion. But we understand compromise is important. So it does not increase revenue and that appears to be something my Republican colleagues have almost single-mindedly focused on in this process. So we have given in on that.

It puts our country on a more sustainable fiscal track, and it allows us to continue the important work to reduce the debt and deficit without the threat of economic calamity hanging over our heads such as the current House proposal does.

On this side, Democrats have bent over backward to get this done. We compromised. We compromised again and then again. The bill that was introduced last night on our side is the fruit of many compromises. We did this not because we think this is the ideal way to tackle this issue—Democrats do want a larger and a more balanced package that we believe will address our problems in a responsible way for years to come—but we put this forward because we know the American people want results, not rhetoric, and we know the consequences of inaction are far too high.

I call on our Republican colleagues to support this legislation, stop playing politics with the American economy, and work with us to solve this problem for the American people.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF PAUL A. ENGELMAYER TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

NOMINATION OF RAMONA VILLAGOMEZ MANGLONA TO BE JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume executive session to consider the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Paul A. Engelmayer, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York, and Ramona Villagomez Manglona, of the Northern Mariana Islands, to be Judge for the District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will be 2 minutes of debate equally divided.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I don't intend to use but 1 minute because I spoke yesterday on this nomination, but I would urge my colleagues to support the nomination of Paul A. Engelmayer to be district judge. He is very well qualified, and I would encourage a "yes" vote.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, yesterday I made a statement about the need for the Senate to consider all 27 judicial nominees reviewed by the Senate Judiciary Committee and now awaiting final action by the Senate. I was disappointed that the votes on Paul Engelmayer to fill a judicial emergency vacancy on the Southern District of New York and Ramona Manglona to fill a 10-year term on the District Court for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, which had already been stalled for 3½ months, were not considered yesterday. These are the kinds of qualified, consensus judicial nominations that in past years would have been confirmed promptly. I hope and trust that at least they will be considered and confirmed today.

After their confirmations, there will be 25 judicial nominations fully considered by the Judiciary Committee awaiting final action by the Senate. Twenty of them were unanimously reported, without a single negative vote. Regrettably, the Senate has not reduced vacancies as dramatically as we did during the Bush administration. Federal judicial vacancies around the country still number too many, and they have persisted for far too long.

By the August recess in the third year of the Bush administration, the Senate had confirmed 143 Federal circuit and district court judges. As we approach the August recess in the third year of the Obama administration, the comparable number after confirmation of Paul Engelmayer and Ramona Manglona today will be only 91.

We have a long way to go to do as well as we did during President Bush's first term, when we confirmed 205 of his judicial nominations. The Senate confirmed 100 of those judicial nominations during the 17 months I was chairman during President Bush's first 2 years in office. So far, as we near the end of President Obama's 30th month in office, the Senate has only been allowed to consider and confirm only 91 of President Obama's Federal circuit and district court nominees. Despite the needs of the Federal judiciary, the delays in confirmation of President Obama's consensus judicial nominees continue to the detriment of the American people.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I yield our time on this side.